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ABSTRACT

This monograph summarizes outcomes of a forum addressing strategies to improve special education program evaluation efforts and orient policymakers, administrators, and advocates to the benefits of program evaluation as an integral part of program improvement. The forum also addressed barriers restricting evaluation of program effectiveness including resource allocation, the lack of technical assistance, and methodological issues. Prior to the meeting, forum participants were sent three background papers to examine and asked for a list of issues in special education program evaluation. During the meeting a total of 92 issues were proposed and organized under seven broad cluster titles: (1) resources, (2) methodology, (3) conceptualization, (4) program improvement, (5) general education reform, (6) compliance monitoring, and (7) stakeholder needs (i.e., the purposes of evaluation). Priority solutions proposed included: development of student outcome measures that relate to those in general education, commitment to outcome variables as indicators of program effectiveness, and design of an evaluation system to meet the varying needs of stakeholders. Appendices include the participant list, the meeting agenda, forms and worksheets, and complete lists of issue clusters and proposed solutions. (DB)

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ED 369 246

A FORUM TO EXAMINE POLICY AND PRACTICE ISSUES SURROUNDING THE ANNUAL EVALUATION OF PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

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Convened on August 2nd and 3rd, 1993
at the Old Town Holiday Inn, Alexandria, VA

by Project FORUM at NASDSE
1800 Diagonal Road, Alexandria, VA 22314

for the Office of Special Education Programs
U.S. Department of Education

EC 302978

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A Forum to Examine Policy and Practices Issues Surrounding the Annual Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

I. PURPOSE AND ORGANIZATION OF THE POLICY FORUM

A. Background and Purpose of the Forum

The meeting was based on the supposition that program improvement efforts require systematic evaluation in order to judge their effectiveness and provide guidance for future innovation. A recent study by Project FORUM at NASDSE found that compliance monitoring has been used almost exclusively to establish the adequacy of special education programs. While adherence to laws and regulation is necessary, a determination of compliance alone does not help professionals and advocates judge the quality of current programs or services; nor do reports and findings of compliance monitoring activities suggest the steps that might be taken to improve educational outcomes for children and youth with disabilities. These essential activities are at the heart of program improvement and can only be accomplished with information gleaned from program evaluation.

This Policy Forum was convened to suggest strategies that can be implemented within the next three years to improve program evaluation efforts and orient policymakers, administrators, and advocates to the benefits of program evaluation as an integral part of program improvement. Solutions to other barriers restricting the evaluation of program effectiveness, including resource allocation, the lack of technical assistance, and methodological issues also were considered.

B. Preparation for the Meeting

Project FORUM staff worked closely with OSEP personnel to identify 15 participants for the Forum. Efforts were made to include researchers, consultants, state and local special education administrators, and other individuals with expertise or interest in program evaluation. The list of participants appears in Appendix A.

To provide a literature basis for the discussion of issues and solutions, Project FORUM staff sent three background papers to each participant:

- Berkowitz, S. (1993). *A guide to conducting stakeholder-based evaluations for state agency/federal evaluation studies projects* (Phase V, Deliverable 23). Rockville, MD: Westat, Inc.

- DeStefano, L. & Wagner, M. (1990). *Outcome assessment in special education: Lessons learned* (Phase II, Deliverable 23, pp. 1 -16). Rockville, MD: Westat, Inc.

- Gonzalez, P. A. (1992). *State procedures for the evaluation of special education program effectiveness*. Alexandria, VA: National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Inc., Project FORUM.

Also prior to the meeting, each participant was asked to submit a list of issues, concerns, or problems he or she perceived as barriers to improving or expanding the use of program evaluation in special education. A form was prepared for this purpose (see Appendix B). Twelve forms were returned containing a total of 130 issues with some duplication across participants.

After receiving the participants' issue lists, Project FORUM compiled a master list of all the issues. A content analysis was performed for the purpose of clustering the issues under broad themes that could be addressed during the discussion of solutions. In general, the wording of the issues was not changed except when: a) more comprehensive wording was adopted for issues submitted by more than one participant, and b) the original submission contained lengthy examples or further explanatory material. The result of the content analysis was 86 unduplicated issues grouped under seven cluster titles. This list was distributed to the participants when they checked into the hotel with instructions to try and review the entries prior to the meeting.

C. Process of the Meeting

The Forum met on August 2nd and 3rd, 1993 at the Old Town Holiday Inn, in Alexandria, VA. The agenda (Appendix C) began with welcoming remarks and an orientation to the tasks of the Forum presented by NASDSE and OSEP staff. Then, participants introduced themselves to the group and cited one or two issues surrounding the evaluation of special education program effectiveness they found most salient.

The rest of the morning was devoted to additions, corrections, and clarifications to the issues submitted prior to the meeting and to the clusters and cluster titles. Three themes emerged from this discussion: (a) the need to use program evaluation information to improve programs and services; (b) the need to examine student outcomes as an indicator of program effectiveness; and (c) the need to coordinate evaluation efforts with general education reform. By the end of this session a revised list of issues and clusters was proposed. During the lunch break, Project FORUM used a notebook computer to addend the issue clusters and titles and to prepare a corrected draft for each participant.

The afternoon session was devoted to proposing solutions to broad questions that were used as cluster titles. Each participant was assigned to one of three small groups representing a range of evaluation expertise and administrative experience. Each group was given a list of the cluster titles arranged in a different order. Using worksheets provided for this purpose (Appendix

D), the groups were asked to begin at the top of their cluster assignment list to discuss and propose solutions and responsible parties. As the worksheets were completed, they were entered into a computer file by Project FORUM staff.

At the start of the second day participants were given a comprehensive list of the proposed solutions generated the previous day by all three groups. The participants were then encouraged to discuss and refine any or all proposed solutions. At the end of the meeting each participant was given three dots to be used to nominate those solutions with the greatest potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness. At noon, OSEP staff closed the meeting with a brief description of future steps to be taken with the information produced at the meeting.

II. OUTCOMES OF THE MEETING

Using a notebook computer, Project FORUM staff maintained a process account of the large group discussions occurring on the first and second day. The notebook also was used to prepare and revise working summaries and other documents for the participants to use throughout the meeting.

During the morning of the first day, the participants engaged in a discussion of the issues submitted prior to the meeting, including the appropriateness of the clusters and cluster titles. As a result of this discussion seven issues were added and one was deleted for a total of 92 issues. The cluster assignments remained the same; however, there were edits to the wording of five cluster titles. The final version of the cluster titles appears below along with representative issues from each cluster. The complete, revised list of issues appears as Appendix E.

- Cluster A: How can we increase access to and more effective use of resources (i.e., money, staff, time, professional development opportunities, technical assistance) needed for program evaluation at the state and local level?
  - In order for data collected for the purpose of program improvement to be effectively utilized, training and technical assistance should be available to stakeholders in the areas of data analysis, strategic planning, program implementation and evaluation
  - There is a lack of fiscal resources for evaluation and data management at the SEA and LEA level
- Cluster B: How can we make evaluation an integral part of educational improvement?

- Evaluation is perceived as an "add-on" rather than an integral part of decisionmaking, management, and administration

- Evaluation efforts will increase paperwork and take more time away from children

- Cluster C: What are the major conceptual issues associated with evaluation of educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities within the context of the total educational experience?

  - There is a lack of consensus as to what "effective" means and how to determine it

  - It is difficult to evaluate different programs (e.g., special education) within the context of the total education of the child

- Cluster D: What are the major methodological problems associated with evaluation of educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities within the context of the total educational experience?

  - There is a need to systematically collect consumer satisfaction data from the perspectives of students and families

  - Interdistrict differences in the categorization of disabilities, placement criteria, and other variables confound the assessment of effectiveness across districts (the same applies across states)

- Cluster E: How can we address issues in special education program evaluation that arise from general education reform?

  - There is a need to link state and local level special education evaluation systems with emerging general education evaluation efforts (e.g. New American Standards) and the inclusion movement

  - Consensus is needed on parameters that define acceptable modifications of "traditional" assessment processes and/or valid alternative assessment techniques

- Cluster F: How can we balance and coordinate program evaluation and compliance monitoring?

- There are regulations at all levels that call for paperwork, not quality indicators

- States need clarification on the differences between a report of compliance results and one of evaluation results

- Cluster G: How do we address differing needs for evaluation information among stakeholders (e.g., accountability, program improvement)?

  - There exists a misalignment between Federal and local needs for evaluation information

  - Attempts are frequently made to have program evaluation systems serve both accountability and program improvement functions and these two functions create conflicting incentives for providing accurate and complete information

During the afternoon of the first day, the cluster titles and individual issues were used within three small groups to guide the development of solutions. A total of 53 solutions were generated at that time. The largest number of solutions (17) focused on the cluster addressing general education reform (Cluster E, above). The large group discussion during Day 2 permitted refinement and clarification of these solutions. As a result, three solutions were added and four were deleted from the list for a total of 52. Appendix F provides a compendium of the revised solutions grouped under the appropriate cluster title and by small group.

The final activity for the participants was to nominate three solutions with the greatest potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness. The dots appearing in the "Group" column of Appendix F represent the number of nominations a particular solution received from the participants. A summary of the solutions (and the responsible parties) with the most votes is provided below. The remaining 46 solutions in Appendix F received three or fewer votes.

9 votes	Develop a series of papers about what special education policy and practice can contribute to the school improvement movement from our research on topics such as parent involvement, individualized education, instructional strategies, transition, and cross-agency collaboration. These papers should be disseminated to policy makers and other stakeholders and should be co-authored by regular and special educators.	None specified

7 votes	All means all. A general education evaluation system must include information pertaining to all students (e.g., Kentucky model). For certain students the ways of achieving or measuring outcomes may vary, but for the vast majority of students the assessments will be the same. Likewise, outcomes for students in special education should parallel those of their regular education peers.	SEA, LEA, National Goals Panel
6 votes	Develop a conceptual model of educational outcomes or indicators of effectiveness that is congruent with models used in general education. (The two major problems in assessment of outcomes are: when do you include the assessment of outcomes and when do you accommodate outcomes in the evaluative process?)	None specified
5 votes	In order to address needs for evaluation information among various stakeholders, it is first necessary to identify stakeholder groups and then, once they are known, to systematically assess their information needs. While it is naive to assume that a single evaluation will address all these needs, it may be feasible to design a system or sequence of local/state/federal evaluation studies that, in combination, may address the constellation of needs.	Federal or state agency
5 votes	Get groups (e.g., OSEP, OERI Regional Labs, RRCs) together on a regional basis several times within a year in a series of training activities on program effectiveness. Papers or "thought pieces" to go along with the technical assistance. Combine and organize TA resources across categorical programs (e.g., Chapter 1, bilingual).	OERI, OSEP, RRC, OERI Regional Labs
4 votes	Stakeholders must understand and become committed to the outcomes perspective. Provide an orientation to the importance of assessing program effectiveness rather than simply the process. Need to be familiar with the importance of outcomes. They must look at results with current resources, rather than trying to create new resources. Tie in with general education reform legislation, since the new legislation is improvement oriented.	Coalition for Citizens with Disabilities, OSEP

III. SUMMARY AND NEXT STEPS

A total of 92 issues were proposed by 15 participants prior to or during the first day of the meeting. These issues were organized under seven broad cluster titles that encompassed issues concerning resources, methodology, conceptualization, program improvement, general education reform, compliance monitoring, and stakeholder needs (i.e., purposes of evaluation). The participants met in small groups during the afternoon of the first day to generate solutions under each cluster. As a result, 46 solutions were proposed. Through a nominating process, six solutions under five cluster titles were selected by the participants as having the greatest potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness.

The priority solutions nominated by the group contained a number of policy implications, including the development of student outcome measures that relate to those in general education; and a commitment to outcome variables, in addition to process, as indicators of program

effectiveness. Other priority solutions suggested new theoretical work to include papers highlighting special education's contribution to school improvement and the design of an evaluation system or sequence that can meet the varying needs of stakeholders. Another solution addressed the continuing need for technical assistance and proposed combining the resources and expertise of OSEP, OERI, Regional Resource Centers, and OERI Labs on a regional basis.

Discussion between Project FORUM staff and OSEP personnel concerning the meeting outcomes produced a few activities that OSEP could undertake in the relatively near future to promote better understanding of the benefits associated with evaluating program effectiveness and the development and use of new evaluation strategies at the state and local level. Briefly these are:

- OSEP needs to map out the extent to which the six highest priority solutions are already being addressed. Where are these activities taking place? What resources are being used? What information is being made available for use by others? One strategy for accomplishing this is to bring together several key OSEP contractors (e.g., the Federal Resource Center, the National Center for Education Outcomes) to examine the output of the policy forum in light of their workscopes and discuss how to direct or re-direct the resources of these projects to support the recommended solutions.

- OSEP could commission a paper that would identify what regulatory and policy initiatives it could take to better support the program effectiveness evaluation requirements under the IDEA. The focus would have to be on evaluation systems that are based on student and program outcomes and **NOT** replicate the existing systems used for monitoring compliance with statutory procedural requirements. This raises a pair of related questions that also should be considered. What in the current monitoring system could be cut back without sacrificing necessary protections for children? What aspects of monitoring need to be strengthened? How do existing statute and regulation affect the flexibility of the monitoring system to make these adjustments?

- One of the lesser known sources of information about program evaluation is the SAFES (State Agency Federal Evaluation Studies) program. A review of these projects could be undertaken in order to identify the lessons learned related to the evaluation of program effectiveness and to inform state and federal evaluation personnel of alternative approaches to the broader issues associated with program evaluation.

APPENDIX A

Participant List

PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

A Forum to Examine Policy and Practice Issues
Surrounding the Annual Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

August 2nd and 3rd, 1993

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APPENDIX B

Issues Submission Form for Participants

ISSUES SURROUNDING PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

From: name~

Instructions: ***On this form please list any issues, concerns, or problems you perceive as barriers to improving or expanding the use of program evaluation in special education. We are interested in any issue regardless of the level of special education administration (i.e., Federal, state, local, or building) most directly effected. The issues may be listed in any order, but please try to phrase them as statements rather than questions. Attach additional sheets, if necessary.***

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

_____

_____

Your ideas are important to the success of this policy forum. Please return this form **ON OR BEFORE JULY 19th** to allow Project FORUM staff sufficient time to compile input from all participants and organize it for efficient use at the meeting. THANK YOU.

Please return the list to: Patricia Gonzalez, NASDSE, 1800 Diagonal Road, Suite 320, Alexandria, VA, 22314, Phone: 703/519-3800, FAX: 703/519-3808.

APPENDIX C

Meeting Agenda

PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

A Forum to Examine Policy and Practice Issues
Surrounding the Annual Evaluation of Program Effectiveness

August 2nd and 3rd, 1993

AGENDA

Monday, August 2, 1993

8:30 - 9:00 — Continental Breakfast - *(5th Floor, Brent I)*

9:00 - 9:30 — Welcome and Orientation

- Welcoming Remarks
  Martha Fields, Executive Director, NASDSE
  Trina Osher, Director, Project FORUM
  Lou Danielson, Acting Director, Division of Innovation and Development, OSEP

- Setting the stage: Susan Sanchez, Education Program Specialist, Division of Innovation and Development, OSEP

- Orientation to the Agenda and Logistics: Pat Gonzalez, Project FORUM

9:30 - 10:30 — Group Introductions

- Participants will briefly describe their experiences in education program evaluation and identify one of their key issues surrounding the evaluation of special education programs

10:30 - 10:45 — ♦ ♦ ♦ Break ♦ ♦ ♦

10:45 - 12:15 — Review and Verification of the Issues, Clusters, and Cluster Titles

- Description of the issue clustering process

- Additions, clarifications, corrections to the individual issues submitted prior to the meeting

- Clarifications or corrections to the clusters and/or cluster titles

12:15 - 1:15 Lunch - (*5th Floor, Brent II*)

1:15 - 1:30 Orientation to Afternoon Activities

- Staff recap of morning session
- Small group formation and assignment

1:30 - 4:15 Small Group Activity

- The groups will be asked to suggest relatively detailed solutions to the issues along with the parties responsible for their implementation

4:15 - 4:30 Reconvene Full Group

- Collection of information from small groups
- Description of planned activities for Tuesday

♦ ♦ ♦

Tuesday, August 3, 1993

8:30 - 9:00 Continental Breakfast - (*5th Floor, Brent I*)

9:00 - 10:30 A Discussion of the Issues and Solutions

10:30 - 10:45 ♦ ♦ ♦ Break ♦ ♦ ♦

10:45 - 11:30 Selecting Promising Solutions

- Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate special education program effectiveness are identified for each issue

11:30 - 12:00 Conclusion and Description of Next Steps

- OSEP and Project FORUM staff

APPENDIX D

Worksheet for Small Group Activity

PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Small Group Activity - August 2, 1993

Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness...

CLUSTER TITLE:_____ **GROUP:** _____

SOLUTIONS	RESPONSIBLE PARTY

APPENDIX E

Revised Issue Clusters

REVISED ISSUE CLUSTERS

Based on Group Discussion - August 2, 1993

A. How can we increase access to and more effective use of resources (i.e., money, staff, time, professional development opportunities, technical assistance) needed for program evaluation at the state and local level?

Even the few evaluation resources available in general education are seldom available in special education because the special education is viewed as a separate system with its own set of resources, e.g. evaluation staff/KO

Lack of fiscal resources for evaluation, data management at SEA and LEA level/GH,WE,NA,MB,MK

Not enough staff available at the state level to design and conduct evaluations and provide technical assistance to LEAs/GH,WE

Not enough funding, materials, and equipment available for adequate data management systems/GH,JL

Program evaluators are unaware of the special issues in studying special education programs/KO

There are too many interrelated variables to permit SEAs to do a complete program evaluation with existing resources/FB,JL

Time must be made available to complete evaluations/MB,MK

Reallocation of resources to collaboration between general and special education/ADDED BY DISCUSSION

Several of the issues in this cluster pertain to training needs:

In order for data collected for the purpose of program improvement to be effectively utilized, training and technical assistance should be available to stakeholders in the areas of data analysis, strategic planning, program implementation and evaluation/SH,MB,KO

Lack of training at local level on how to write IEPs that can be used in evaluation process/CH

Lack of training opportunities in evaluation for teachers and administrators (state and local)/WE,LD,MK,KO

Shortage of trained practitioners and service providers in evaluation/NA,MB,JL

Special educators lack a collegial network for sharing program evaluation experiences and results/KO

Varying levels of staff expertise greatly affects program evaluation/MK

B. How can we make evaluation an integral part of educational improvement?

Evaluation is perceived as something an outside expert conducts/KO

Avoidance of evaluation information permits the status quo to continue (no need for change)/WE

Building support among teachers, principals, and others for evaluation may take considerable time and effort/MB

Controversy over "outcomes" (OBE) has slowed push for evaluation/CH

Evaluation efforts will increase paperwork and take more time away from children/WE,NA,MK

Evaluation is not an activity valued by educators/WE,CH

Evaluation is perceived as an "add-on" rather than being integral to decision making, management and administration/KO,JL

Evaluation results are frequently used for punitive purposes and therefore evaluation is perceived as negative/KO

Intra and inter agency, continuous evaluations are difficult to do/ADDED BY DISCUSSION

Lack of commitment to address program improvement through evaluation over time/GH,JL

Lack of rewards/incentives for using program evaluation information/LD

No real desire at the state/federal level to evaluate effectiveness/JY,WE

People do not want to have their work scrutinized or to be held accountable/WE,NA,KO,JL

Significant stakeholders (e.g., parents, advocates, regulators, funders, taxpayers) are more concerned with access to services, appropriateness of services, and fiscal accountability than outcomes for students/NA

Special educators are under the impression that program evaluation takes unique skills that they cannot easily learn/KO

We are disseminating old, program and practice models that have not been evaluated for effectiveness/NA

C. What are the major conceptual issues associated with evaluation of educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities within the context of the total educational experience?

A lack of consensus as to what "effective" means and how to determine it/JY,NA,JL

Careful consideration must be given to how the evaluation data will be used/JL

Clearly, evaluation drives programs so we need to be extraordinarily cautious that we have the child's individual needs always at the top of our priority list/MK

Difficulty in deciding to evaluate special education generally or by category/JY

Generalizing results from unique programs designed for individuals creates a conundrum when the intent is to describe a generic "special education program"/KO

Need to define student success/GH

How to evaluate different programs (e.g., special education) within the context of the total education of the child./ADDED BY DISCUSSION

No consensus exists regarding a definition for program evaluation nor are clear distinctions made between program evaluation, compliance monitoring, and research/KO

Special education is being re-defined as a service, not a program. This may necessitate different evaluative techniques/FB

The terms effectiveness, quality, impact, and outcomes remain undefined/KO

There is a lack of shared understanding regarding the Joint Committee Standards on the Evaluation of Educational Programs, Projects and Materials/KO

There is a lack of consensus on the intentions of education and the expected outcomes that would accrue therefrom/KO

When evaluation is primarily data or program outcome driven, the statistics can become the focus of the evaluation rather than the student and their outcomes - putting numbers ahead of the students/MK,JL

How do we include students "at risk" of placement in special education?/ADDED BY DISCUSSION

D. What are the major methodological problems associated with evaluation of educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities within the context of the total educational experience?

An assessment needs to be made of the validity and reliability of evaluation results to ascertain if they should be used to make program changes/MB

Because IEPs are generic, nonspecific, and modest in scope, they do not adequately define student outcomes/NA

Evaluation models need to be generated that are flexible and responsive to small and large states, urban and rural settings, and are cost effective/JL, CH

Evaluations in special education have focused on accuracy over utility and thus are too frequently perceived as academic exercises/KO

Formal evaluation designs (e.g., quasi-experimental designs) often are not practical for evaluations conducted at the local or school level/MB

Goals and parameters are not set consistently for programs, so evaluation consistency is difficult/MK

How can we evaluate the special education component of a student's education?/ADDED BY DISCUSSION

How do we evaluate the effectiveness of education for students with disabilities?/ADDED BY DISCUSSION

Instrumentation available for measuring outcomes tend to focus on academic outcomes rather than life role skill outcomes that are the intention of many special education programs/KO

Program implementation should be assessed before the impact of the program since programs often are not implemented as expected/MB

There are no consistent links to systems for disseminating evaluation results, e.g., using the CSPD to share successful practices/KO

There needs to be valid sampling techniques available for use statewide/JL

We need to design efficient stakeholder evaluation models that include consumers for use statewide/JL

We need an organized way to look at evaluation that maintains the integrity of individual programs within systems and allows for empowerment and school-based decisionmaking/MK

Several of the issues in this cluster pertain to data collection:

Data that exists on students with disabilities in the large scale databases are insufficiently flagged/KO

Interdistrict differences in the categorization of disabilities and placement criteria (and other variables) confound the assessment of effectiveness across districts. The same applies across states/RT,NA,MK,JL

National samples of "all" students systematically exclude students in residential facilities and students whose total programs are provided through special education services/KO

No consistency across states or among agencies within states as to the type of data collected/JY,JL

Population sizes of students with disabilities are so small that generalization is difficult/KO

There is a need to know how to aggregate evaluation data without taking flexibility away from states by mandating a certain set of data/JL

There is a need to identify and collect measures to assess the impact of state-level policies (e.g. changes in funding formulas and service delivery models) on the provision of special education services and on the satisfaction and outcomes of students with disabilities/SH

There is a need to refocus data collection efforts on factors that can be manipulated to effect program (and individual) outcomes/SH

There is a need to collect post-school outcome measures on students with disabilities who exit school/SH

There is a need to systematically collect consumer satisfaction data from the perspectives of students and families/SH,JL

We need to develop mechanisms for measuring outcomes that are important to all stakeholders, including the student/MK

E. How can we address issues in special education program evaluation that arise from general education reform?

Consensus needed on parameters that define acceptable modifications of "traditional" assessment processes and/or valid alternative assessment techniques/GH,KO

Difficulty in determining what outcomes (e.g., jobs) to hold special education accountable for/JY

General education and special education outcomes are frequently undefined and more frequently unrelated, thus creating need for separate conceptual maps and separate program evaluation systems/KO

Low or uncertain performance (achievement) standards for students with disabilities/JY,RT

~~LACK OF AWARENESS OF the degree to which modifications to statewide assessments are used for students with disabilities/GH,RT~~ - DELETED BY DISCUSSION

No consistency as to whether students with disabilities are included in statewide assessment programs/GH,RT,KO

No consensus as to how the students with disabilities fit into the standards setting in general ed./JY,RT,NA

There is a need to link state and local level special education evaluation systems with emerging general education evaluation efforts (e.g. New American Standards) and the inclusion movement/SH,MB,JL

How do we prevent discrimination toward students with disabilities when using general assessment tests?/ADDED BY DISCUSSION

F. How can we balance and coordinate program evaluation and compliance monitoring?

As long as LEAs remain compliant they are "safe", even if programs are of poor quality/FB,JL

Even when evaluation expectations are defined for LEAs and SEAs, SEAs and federal government have inadequate standards and insufficient systems for follow-up to ensure that program evaluations are conducted and used for decision making/KO

Funding formulas based on paperwork/CH

Regulations at all levels that call for paperwork not quality indicators/CH

SEAs are held to only compliance issues by OSEP monitoring creating a lack of incentive/FB

States need clarification on the differences between a report of compliance results and one of evaluation results/GH

States need clarification on the content of the annual evaluation section of the Part B State Plan/GH

There remains a question as to whether districts can or should focus on effectiveness issues before resolving compliance issues/FB

Use of compliance monitoring as the principal evaluation strategy /JY

G. How do we address differing needs for evaluation information among stakeholders (e.g., accountability, program improvement)?

Attempts are frequently made to have program evaluation systems serve both accountability and program improvement functions and these two functions create conflicting incentives for providing accurate and complete information/KO

Conflicts may arise between the movement toward accountability and program evaluation/MB

Confusion exists regarding the different purposes for program evaluation, e.g., accountability, program improvement, public information, policy development/KO

Misalignment between Federal and local needs for evaluation information/LD,SH

Misalignment between Federal expectations and local capabilities in program evaluation/LD

The results of evaluations need to be presented in a format useful to service providers and with recommendations useful to them/MB

APPENDIX F

List of Proposed Solutions

PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Small Group Activity - August 2, 1993

Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness ...

CLUSTER A: **How can we increase access to and more effective use of resources (i.e., money, staff, time, professional development opportunities, technical assistance) needed for program evaluation at the state and local level?**

Group[1]	Solutions	Responsible Party
I	As part of the reauthorization of IDEA, it could be mandated that funding be contingent upon the provision of the data on program effectiveness. Program effectiveness should be clearly distinguished from program compliance. If so, states will most likely oppose because of lack of resources, so a proportion of the funding will be allocated toward program effectiveness evaluation. The money could come from compliance monitoring.	Congress
I ••••	Stakeholders must become committed to the outcomes perspective. Provide an orientation to the importance of assessing program effectiveness rather than simply the process. Need to be familiar with the importance of outcomes. They must look at results with current resources, rather than trying to create new resources. Tie in with general education reform legislation, since the new legislation is improvement oriented.	CCD and OSEP
Lrg. Group Discussion •••••	Get groups (e.g., OSEP, OERI Regional Labs, RRCs) together on a regional basis several times over a year in a series of training activities on program effectiveness. Papers or "thought pieces" to go along with the technical assistance. Combine and organize TA resources in categorical programs (e.g., Chapter 1, bilingual).	OERI, OSEP, RRC, OERI Regional Labs

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PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
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Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness ...

CLUSTER B. **How can we make evaluation an integral part of educational improvement?**

Group[2]	Solutions	Responsible Party
1	Promulgate promising practices. OSEP could generate funds for this. Look at other states who have implemented program evaluation and highlight successful practices through a conference, journal article, etc. (AEA)	OSEP
1	Withhold a portion of district funding for a competition. Districts compete for funding for a program evaluation plan. This creates an incentive to come forward and compete for funding. So, the LEA who wins will implement the program. Other districts that competed will have a model to implement if they choose. New Jersey is a an example (extra money for districts that evaluate effectiveness).	SEAs

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PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
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Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness ...

CLUSTER C. **What are the major conceptual issues associated with evaluation of educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities within the context of the total educational experience?**

Group[1]	Solutions	Responsible Party
1 •	Get a group of regular, special educators, and other stakeholders to identify the components of program effectiveness. What do we even consider to be effective program evaluation: child count; transition; drop out rate; student graduation?	everyone (general and special education)
3 •••	Gain consensus around "effectiveness" and how to measure it. What needs to be done next is too "sell" this from a values perspective to general education and assure our colleagues that adaptations in curriculum, instruction, and the physical environment can be made in general education settings.	NCEO
3 •••••••••	Develop a series of papers about what special education policy and practice can contribute to the school improvement movement from our research on topics such as parent involvement, individualized education, instructional strategies, transition, and cross-agency collaboration. These papers should be disseminated to policy makers and other stakeholders and should be co-authored by regular and special educators. See grid (next page) for examples.	

[1] The dots appearing in the "Group" column represent the number of "preferred solution" nominations from the participants.

GRID TO EXPLAIN SERIES OF PAPERS
Cluster C - Group 3

Sp.Ed. Areas of Historical Experience	Current Status		
	Results in Spec. Ed. (Data Base)	Implications for Regular Ed (Reg. Ed. Data Base)	Ed Reform Goals
Parental involvement			
Cross-agency collaboration on behalf of children			
Study & planning for transition of students			
Individual student program tailoring and assessment			
Performance assessment			

PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION

Small Group Activity - August 2, 1993

Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness ...

CLUSTER D. **What are the major methodological problems associated with evaluation of educational services and outcomes for students with disabilities within the context of the total educational experience?**

Group[4]	Solutions	Responsible Party
1	States competition for monies can occur at the systems level. If LEAs knew they would get funding, it could help to maintain the integrity of individual buildings. They would feel more comfortable in having a decision or choice as to what is done.	SEAs, LEAs
1 •••••	Develop a conceptual model of educational outcomes or indicators of effectiveness that is congruent with models used in general education. (The two major problems in assessment of outcomes are: when do you include the assessment of outcomes and when do you accommodate outcomes in the evaluative process?)	
2	Data should not be aggregated beyond its level of interpretability or meaningfulness. Without appropriate contextual information, it is often difficult and possibly unethical to make meaning of aggregated data. "Aggregateability" should not be assumed; instead it must be carefully justified and empirically validated.	OSEP
2 •	Perhaps one strategy that may prove useful for communication the findings or impact of federal or multi-site initiatives would be to conduct meta-evaluations of individual evaluation reports. The meta-analyses would be aimed at synthesizing findings from state/local reports in ways that preserve important context and allow for understanding of commonalities and differences among local/state implementation and impact.	OSEP
2 •	In order to have true "stakeholders-based" evaluation, the design must permit all stakeholder groups to have equal input into the design, data collections, reporting, and use of the evaluation without fear of reprisal. Different information for making different decisions.	Federal, state, local agency
Lrg. Group Discussion	Need data collection systems for policymakers at state/federal levels -- a different kind of data for policy analysis.	

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Lrg. Group Discussion	Policy forum to discuss what information is needed by policymakers, who are the policymakers, and how do we meet state and national education goals.	
3 •	Allow 3-5 states to have waivers for a reduction in compliance data to promote use of resources for outcomes/services evaluation. Waivers would be based on criteria that indicate strong former compliance (access and procedures). Application for waiver process would require key stakeholder involvement and approval.	OSEP and selected states and LEAs
3	Consider from an organizational perspective locating evaluation and compliance monitoring in one unit.	OSEP and SEAs
3	Results of program evaluation will not be utilized in a punitive fashion, but rather will be used to facilitate programmatic change through ongoing improvement plans, professional development, and technical assistance.	OSEP, LEAs, and SEAs
3	Position paper that describes and analyzes the state of evaluation in special education and makes recommendations regarding evaluation design that can inform a variety of stakeholders including policymakers and consumers.	Project FORUM or some other contractor of OSEP if FORUM isn't appropriate
3 •	A joint initiative by OERI & OSEP to analyze the findings of OSEP funded field initiated and target research projects in the areas of family involvement, alternative assessment, effective instructional practices, and other topics relevant to the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general school reform movements.	OSEP and OERI
3	Expand Section 618 authority to expand technical assistance to enable all states to apply	Congress - requires change in legislation to allow non-funded states to receive TA
3	Consider joint research and evaluation initiatives between OERI and OSEP. Have OERI and OSEP develop a joint position paper on the relationship between special education and general education reform.	Explore mechanisms such as intra-department agreements or legislative mandate
3	Disseminate syntheses of high quality evaluation methods and findings conducted by LEAs and SEAs.	Consider joint dissemination between RRCs and OERI funded centers
3 •	Develop a set of explicit standards and broad outcomes at both the student and service system levels that interface with general education standards associated with school reform efforts and that take into account the adaptations needed for individual students.	NAEP, OERI, OSEP, SEAs, PTI, national goals panel, NCEO, CCSSO
3	Provide increased amount of money for the study of specific problems of national relevance for a limited scope of time.	OSERS and NIDRR

PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Small Group Activity - August 2, 1993

Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness ...

CLUSTER E. **How can we address issues in special education program evaluation that arise from general education reform?**

Group[5]	Solutions	Responsible Party
1	Project FORUM needs to convene group of people representative of the disability community to come to agreement on how they want special education students included in performance standards. Look at the whole "standard setting business" and how we want students with disabilities included.	NASDSE
2 •••••••	All means all. A general education evaluation system must include information pertaining to all students (e.g., Kentucky model). For certain students the ways of achieving or measuring outcomes may vary, but for the vast majority of students the assessments will be the same. Likewise, outcomes for students in special education should parallel those of their regular education peers.	SEA, LEA, national goals panel (NESIC reports should address this)
2	Outcomes and standards should be defined and measured in ways that are appropriate to a diverse student population. The processes used to set standards should enable participation of representatives of general and special education, LEP, racial and ethnic minorities, gifted and talented programs and other special populations.	SEA, LEA
2	Goals and objectives on a student's IEP should be clearly linked to agreed upon goals for learning or standards for all students. When used in this way, the IEP process can serve as a means for monitoring student progress toward achieving meaningful outcomes.	NESIC, LEA, SEA
2 •	There is need for a systematic program of research examining the effects of assessment modification on student performance (especially for performance assessments) and the relationship between the assessment and the agreed upon outcomes.	OSEP
3	There is a need for more explicit and rigorous evaluation requirements that address program improvement as well as compliance.	

[5] The dots appearing in the "Group" column represent the number of "preferred solution" nominations from the participants.

3	Allow 3-5 states to have waivers for a reduction in compliance data to promote use of resources for outcomes/services evaluation. Waivers would be based on criteria that indicate strong former compliance (access and procedures). Application for waiver process would require key stakeholder involvement and approval.	OSEP and selected states and LEAs
3	Consider from an organizational perspective locating evaluation and compliance monitoring in one unit.	OSEP and SEAs
3	Results of program evaluation will not be utilized in a punitive fashion, but rather will be used to facilitate programmatic change through ongoing improvement plans, professional development, and technical assistance.	OSEP, LEAs, and SEAs
3	Position paper that describes and analyzes the state of evaluation in special education and makes recommendations regarding evaluation design that can inform a variety of stakeholders including policymakers and consumers.	Project FORUM or some other contractor of OSEP if FORUM isn't appropriate
3	A joint initiative by OERI & OSEP to analyze the findings of OSEP funded field initiated and target research projects in the areas of family involvement, alternative assessment, effective instructional practices, and other topics relevant to the inclusion of students with disabilities into the general school reform movements.	OSEP and OERI
3	Expand Section 618 authority to expand technical assistance to enable all states to apply	Congress - requires change in legislation to allow non-funded states to receive TA
3	Consider joint research and evaluation initiatives between OERI and OSEP. Have OERI and OSEP develop a joint position paper on the relationship between special education and general education reform.	explore mechanisms such as intra-department agreements or legislative mandate
3	Disseminate syntheses of high quality evaluation methods and findings conducted by LEAs and SEAs.	consider joint dissemination between RRCs and OERI funded centers
3	Develop a set of explicit standards and broad outcomes at both the student and service system levels that interface with general education standards associated with school reform efforts and that take into account the adaptations needed for individual students.	NAEP, OERI, OSEP, SEAs, PTI, national goals panel, NCEO
3	Insure that state and national standards (e.g., assessment, core curriculum) include the needs of students receiving special education services in all aspects of design and implementation.	OSERS, OERI, NAEP, USDE, CCSSO, NGA
3	Provide increased amount of money for the study of specific problems of national relevance for a limited scope of time.	OSERS and NIDRR

NOTE: The majority of solutions for Cluster E on this page also appear in Cluster D.

PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Small Group Activity - August 2, 1993

Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness ...

CLUSTER F. **How can we balance and coordinate program evaluation and compliance monitoring?**

Group[6]	Solutions	Responsible Party
2	Information collected for monitoring purposes should have a theoretical as well as an empirical relationship to desirable and agreed upon program outcomes. There is an obligation for those establishing regulations to demonstrate these relationships.	Federal and state agency
2	Let's fund a study where we look at the relationship between elements of monitoring and student outcomes (effectiveness). The results of this study could be used to design a second generation study where factors that have been shown to be related to outcomes are incorporated into a monitoring system that could be piloted in some volunteer sites. Advocacy groups and parents should be engaged in the "re-regulation" process to allay their concerns.	OSEP, CCD, national parent organizations
2	Federal and state agencies should develop delivery or process standards for evaluation to clearly differentiate among compliance monitoring, accountability, evaluation, and evaluation for program improvement.	Federal and state agency

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PROGRAM EVALUATION IN SPECIAL EDUCATION
Small Group Activity - August 2, 1993

Solutions with the most potential for improving the capacity of SEAs to evaluate program effectiveness ...

CLUSTER G. **How do we address differing needs for evaluation information among stakeholders (e.g., accountability , program improvement)?**

Group[7]	Solutions	Responsible Party
2	Funding requirements are driving the way evaluation is conducted by SEAs. The only federal dollars that don't require state match are monitoring dollars; so monitoring takes precedence over program improvement. One solution to this problem is for OSEP to acknowledge and support both evaluations for monitoring purposes and evaluation for program improvement. The regulations should target no-match funds for both types of evaluation activities. Technical assistance should be available for both.	OSEP
2 •	Focus, funding and timelines for evaluation should vary over the life of the project. In the first year of funding, program evaluation activities would emphasize needs assessment and improvement and would not be used for accountability. In subsequent years, as the state program matures more and more, accountability aspects would be employed. Technical assistance would vary according to the developmental level of the project.	Federal or state agency
2	Federal and state expectations for evaluation should be stated clearly in an RFP, detailing purposes for the evaluation, intended uses of and rules governing access to the data, anticipated costs and time demands, time lines, and if possible, guidelines for the design of the evaluation and procedures for monitoring its conduct.	Federal or state agency
2 •	In some instances, if the goal is to foster evaluation for self reflection and improvement and to remove the more threatening aspects of evaluation, the funding agency may find it preferable to audit the process used to carry out the evaluation rather than focusing on the findings of the evaluation. In this case, the findings will be reserved for use at the program level.	Federal or state agency
2	Stakeholder identification processes should insure participation of a diverse group of parents, peers, professionals, and policy makers. It is particularly crucial to enable participation of under represented groups and to refrain from practices that permit limited or token participation.	

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2 •••••	In order to address needs for evaluation information among various stakeholders, it is first necessary to identify stakeholder groups and then, once they are known, to systematically assess their information needs. While it is naive to assume that a single evaluation will address all these needs, it may be feasible to design a system or sequence of local/state/federal evaluation studies that, in combination, may address the constellation of needs.	Federal or state agency
2	The process for assessing needs in designing evaluation should allow for repeated reconvening of stakeholder groups to develop common definitions, complementary methodologies, and should be conducted in the context of other evaluation and reform activities within the state or locality.	Federal or state agency